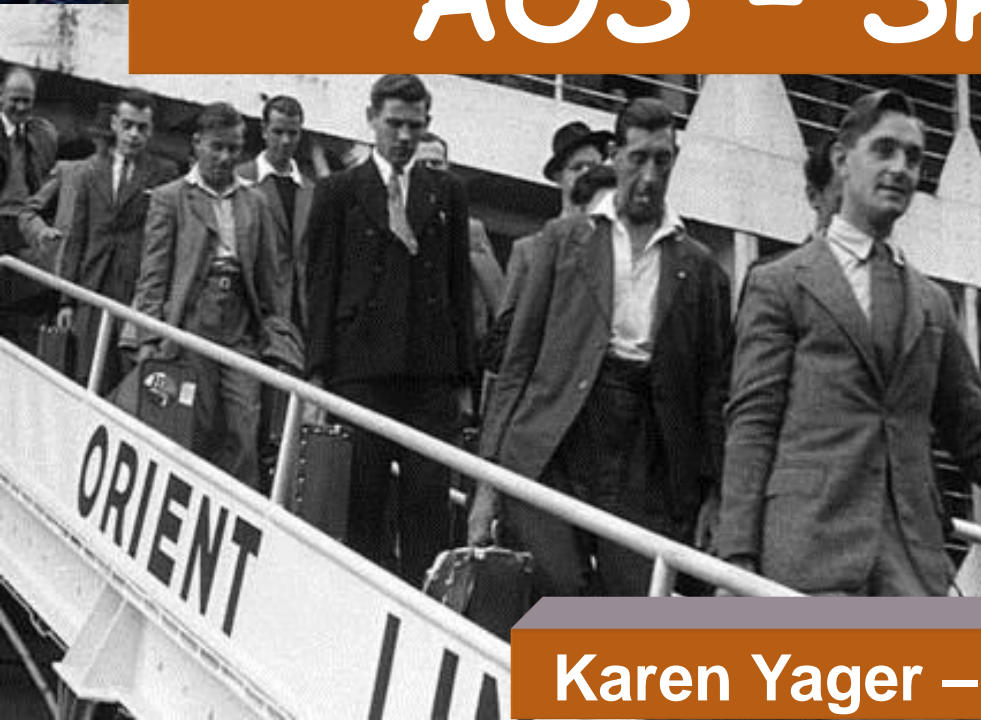




# AOS - Skrzynecki

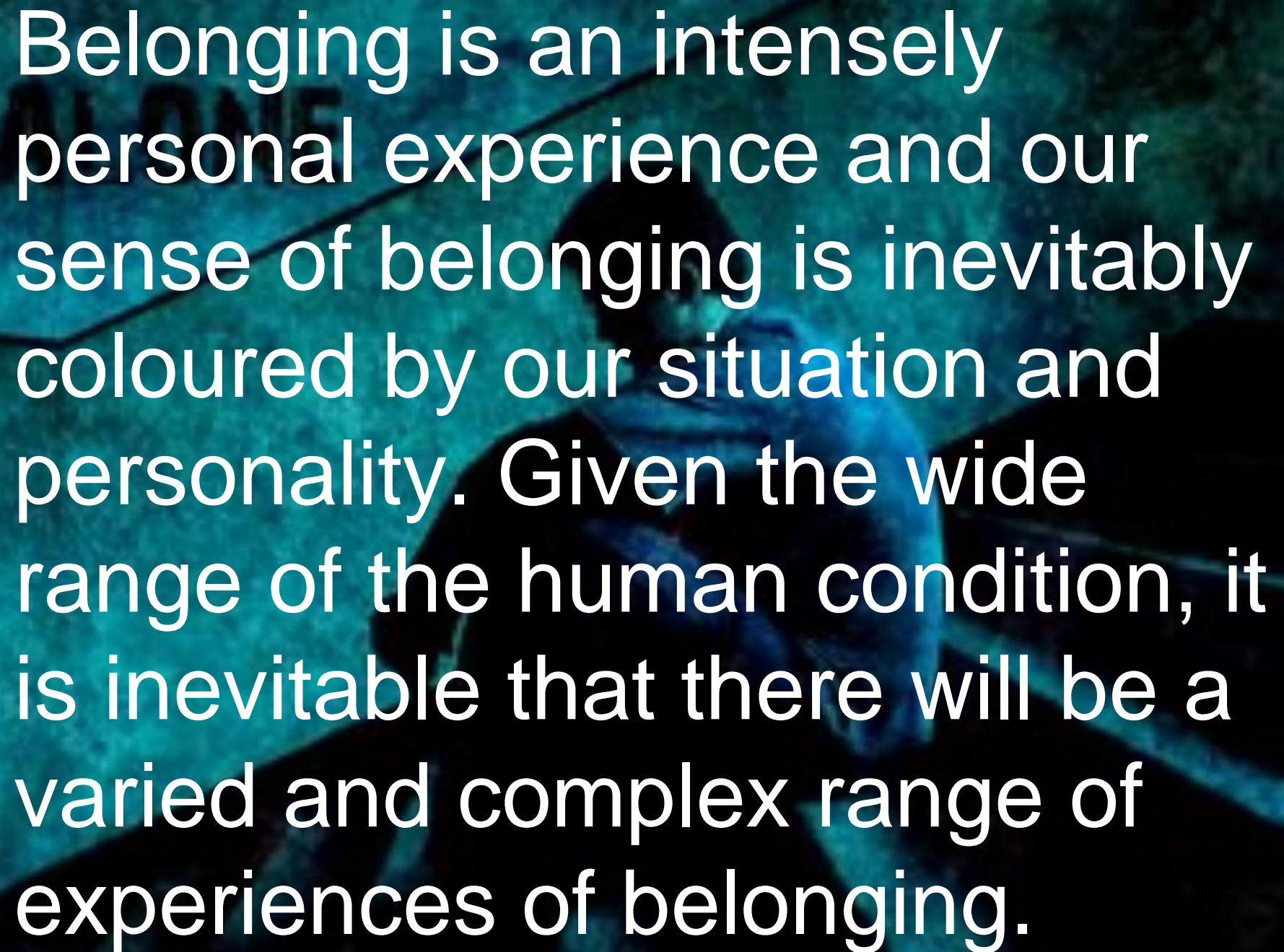


Karen Yager – Knox Grammar

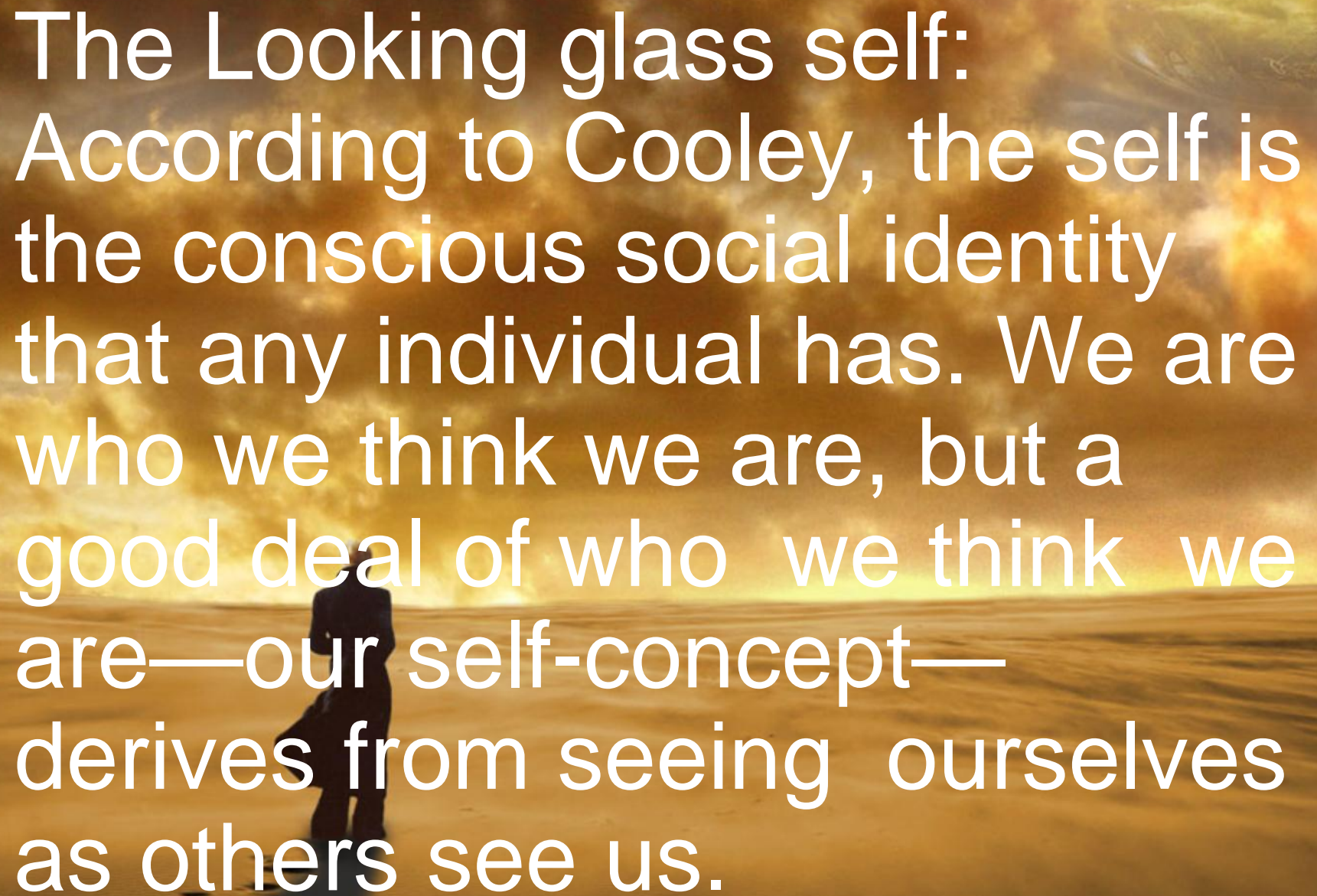
- 
- The background of the slide is a painting. It depicts a person, possibly a woman, in a dark, swirling, and turbulent landscape. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and red, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.
- ***‘Man – a being in search of meaning.’***

**Plato**

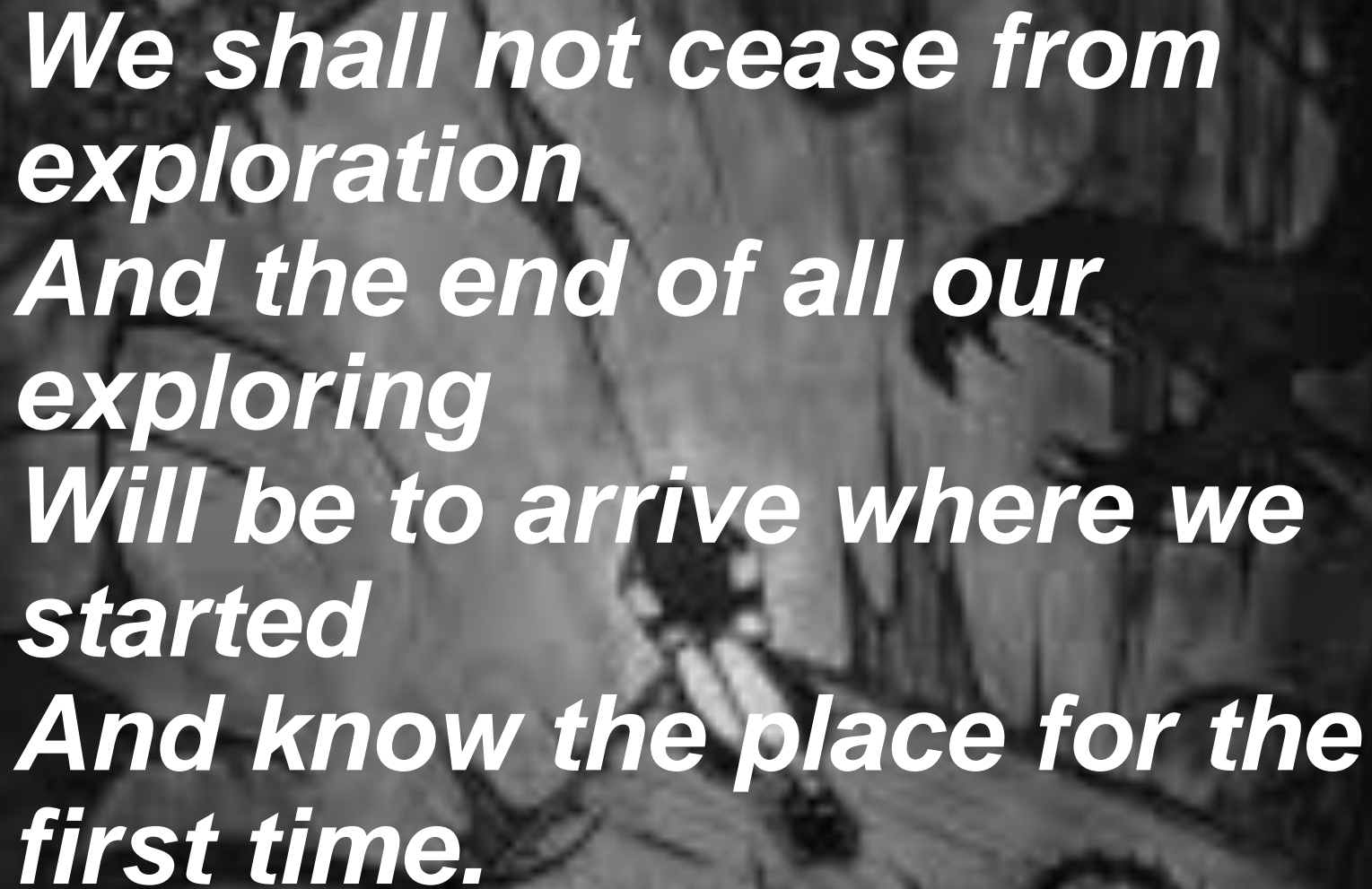
- **What do the texts tell you about the human experience?**

A person is sitting on a bench, their head buried in their hands in a gesture of despair or distress. The scene is dimly lit with a strong blue-green tint, creating a somber and melancholic atmosphere. The person's face is partially visible, showing signs of emotional pain. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the isolation of the subject.

Belonging is an intensely personal experience and our sense of belonging is inevitably coloured by our situation and personality. Given the wide range of the human condition, it is inevitable that there will be a varied and complex range of experiences of belonging.

A person is walking away from the viewer on a sandy beach towards a bright sunset. The sky is filled with orange and yellow clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon. The person's shadow is cast long on the sand, and a series of footprints are visible behind them.

The Looking glass self:  
According to Cooley, the self is the conscious social identity that any individual has. We are who we think we are, but a good deal of who we think we are—our self-concept—derives from seeing ourselves as others see us.



*We shall not cease from  
exploration  
And the end of all our  
exploring  
Will be to arrive where we  
started  
And know the place for the  
first time.*

**TS. Eliot – ‘The Waste Land’**

# HSC Examination Rubrics

In your answer you will be assessed on how well you:

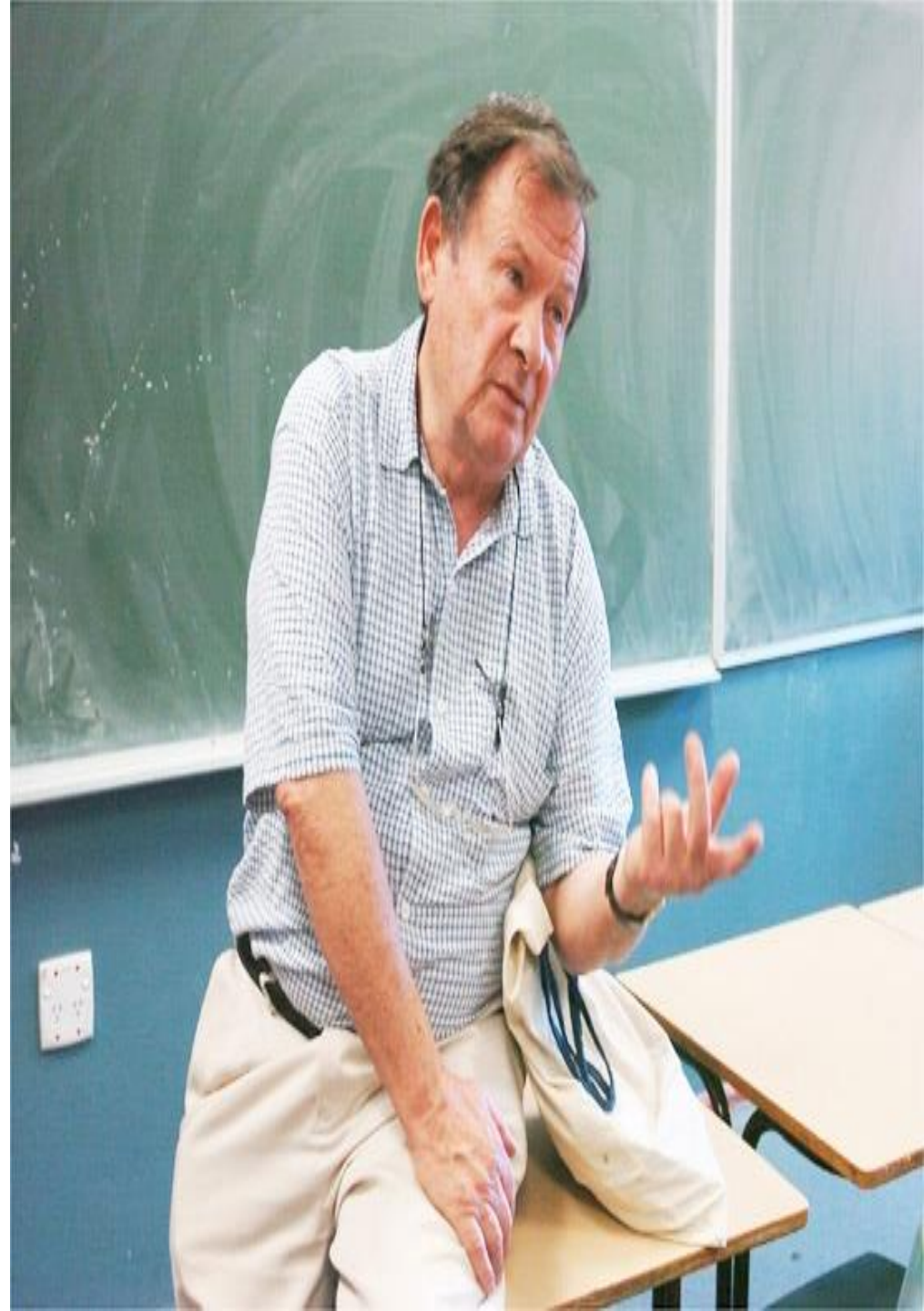
- demonstrate understanding of the **concept** of belonging in the context of your study
- analyse, explain and assess the ways belonging is **represented** in a variety of texts
- organise, develop and express ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context

# The Concept of Belonging

- How do you view the notion of belonging?
- Does the poetry invite you to belong to its world?
- How do the poems represent the concept of belonging?
- How does your perception and assumptions about belonging compare with that of Skrzynecki's?
- Has your perspective been challenged or altered?
- What lines of argument or theses have you developed as a result?

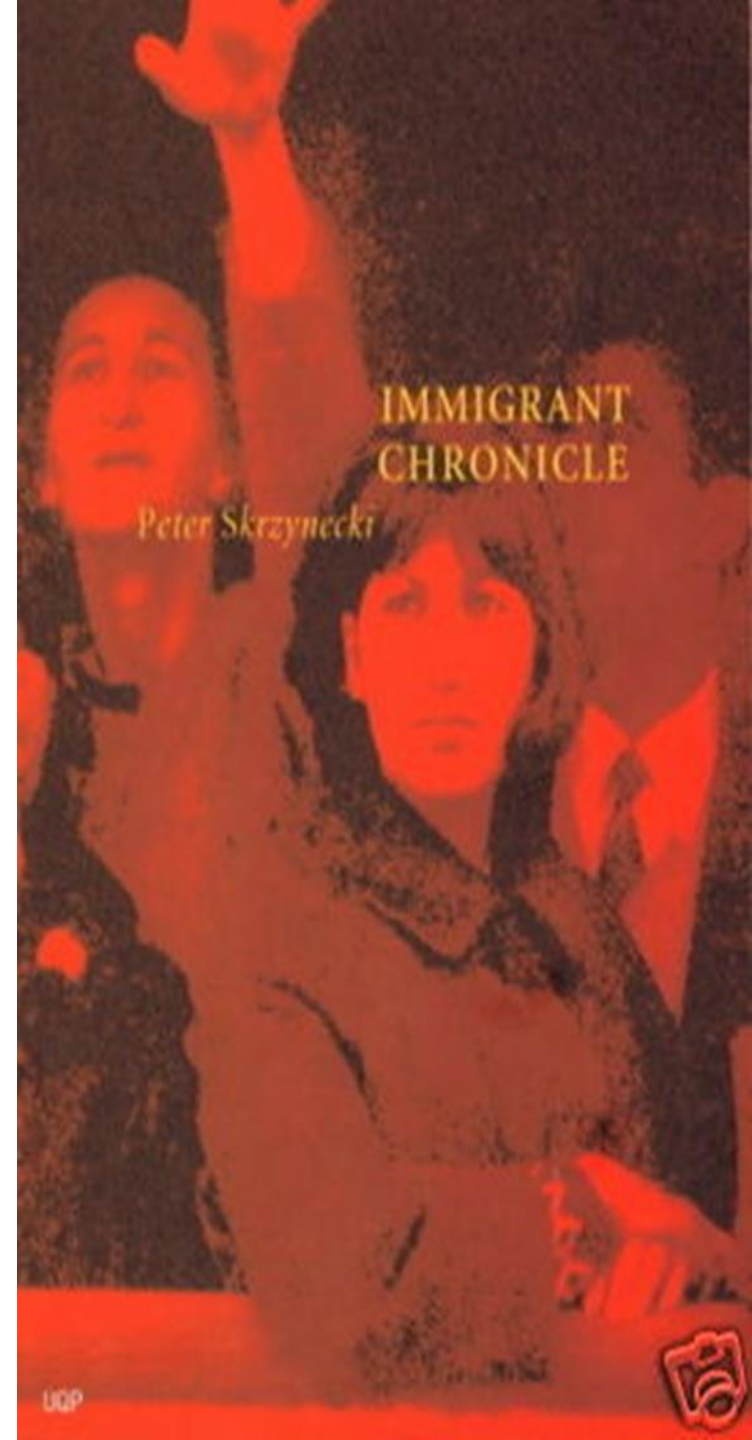
# Contextualisation

- How Skrzynecki's and your perspectives are shaped by personal, cultural, historical and social contexts
- Child of migrants fleeing from a war-torn, fractured Europe in 1949
- Two years at Parkes Migrant Centre



# Contextualisation

- Began writing meditative poems about the landscape and his teaching experiences in 1964
- *Immigrant Chronicle*  
1975 first time he wrote about the migrant experience and his very personal feelings of dislocation and alienation



# Perceptions

- Perception refers to the interplay of recognition and interpretation and is influenced by our preconceived ideas, memories, experiences and senses. It can alter and even distort how we view the notion of belonging.



# Perceptions

- Imagine arriving in a new land: the sights, the smells and sounds
- Living in a Polish Ukrainian home: sounds, smells, sights and then mixing with Australian friends



*“I feel an affinity to Australia like to no other country and would not live anywhere else. And yet, and yet, at the strangest times, a feeling stirs in the bones, in the blood, and memories of Europe emerge, memories that exist irrespective of time or where I am at the moment, and I know that I was born somewhere else and that place will always exist for me as a source of inspiration”*

Skrzynecki, P. Two wives in Krakow and a house in Treptow. *GriffithREVIEW* Issue 6:  
Our Global Place.

# AOS- *Immigrant Chronicles*

- Skrzynecki's poetry reflects the plight of migrants who experience feelings of **dislocation** and **alienation** in their new country, and the dilemma of their descendants who are caught between the culture of their parents and the country they now live in.
- In their quest to find a place where they belong, these descendants, such as Skrzynecki who came to Australia as a child, often reject their cultural heritage, and question their own **cultural identity**.

# AOS- Immigrant Chronicles

- The sixteenth century French writer Michael de Montaigne wrote that, “**The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to ourselves.**”
- With the exception of Skrzynecki's parents who are represented as having a **strong sense of self** and who have found a connection to their home and their beloved garden, and their Polish friends in Australia, there is an overwhelming sense that the poet's persona has not accepted who he is as he feels **disconnected** from his birth place, his cultural heritage and his new country.

## AOS- Immigrant Chronicles

- Skrzynecki consistently communicates feelings of **dislocation** and **alienation**. All of his poems reveal this tension between belonging and not belonging.
- However, the last poem does signify a modification of Skrzynecki's attitude towards belonging as he finally accepts his Polish and Ukrainian heritage.



# Aspects of Belonging

- The potential of the individual to enrich or challenge a community or group: the child who rejects his cultural heritage
- Represent choices not to belong, or barriers which prevent belonging: Prejudice, rejection of cultural heritage



# Aspects of Belonging

- The way attitudes to belonging are modified over time: Skrzynecki by the end of anthology has come to accept the call of his cultural heritage
- The prophetic last four lines of 'Postcards' signify that although Skrzynecki denies emphatically the call of his birthplace and his cultural heritage, he will always be connected to Poland; communicating his reconciliation with his cultural identity and legacy, and his acceptance that he does belong.

# Poetic Form

- Poetry is an ideal medium for exploring the notion of belonging as it enables Skrzynecki to communicate his personal feelings and attitudes
- Autobiographical, meditative and personal
- His voice resonates because of his repeated use of the first person and the structure of the sentences in the stanzas that replicate how we relay memories to others
- The imagery is evocative, and the alliteration and assonance give the poems a quiet, reflective rhythm

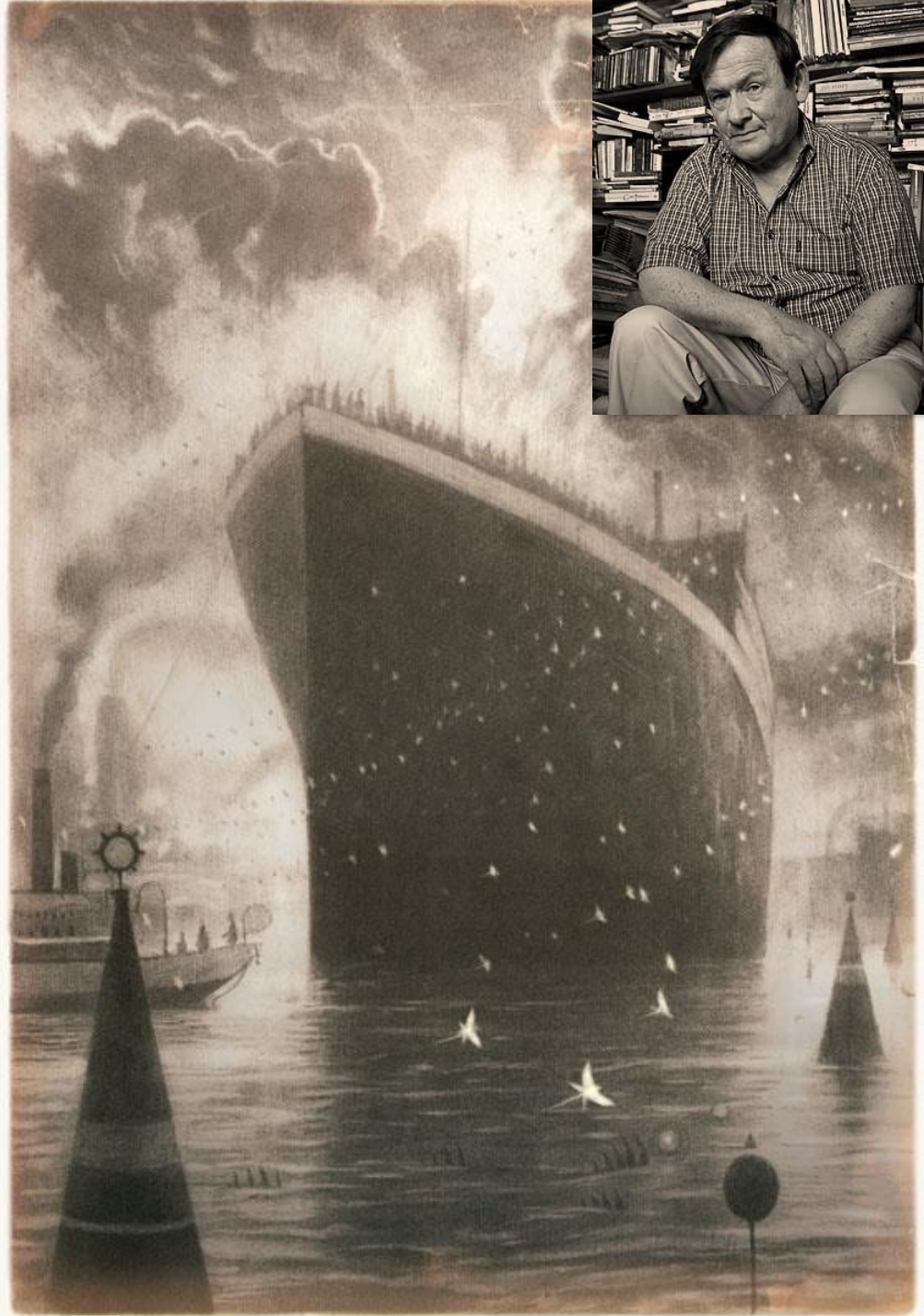
## Barriers which prevent belonging

- Leaving your birthplace at the age of five: too young to have identified with the place and its culture
- Being the child of migrants who talk of a place of which you have no memory
- Prejudice and detention
- Denial and rejection
- Perceptions



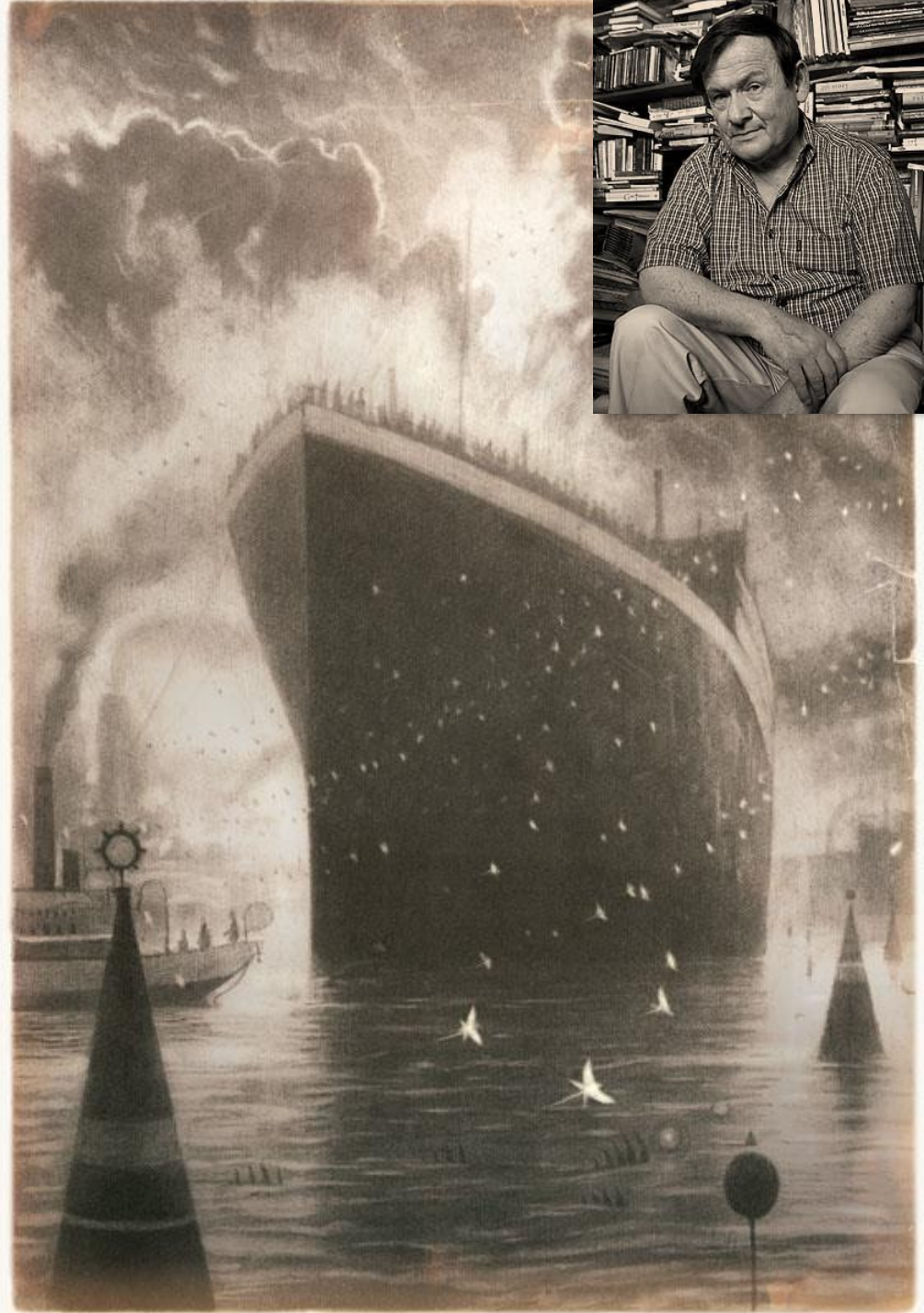
# Feliks Skrzynecki

- Conflict between Skrzynecki's love and respect for his father and his growing separation from his father's Polish culture
- Ambivalent relationship with his father
- Strong sense of familial belonging
- Migrant children assimilate and seek a new place to belong



# Feliks Skrzynecki

- Title signaling the importance of this gentle, stoic man in his life and emphasising his father's Polish background
- The personal possessive pronoun "*My gentle father*" creates a structure that resembles a personal conversation with the reader, inviting us into his world to share his reflections about his father and his childhood.



# Feliks Skrzynecki

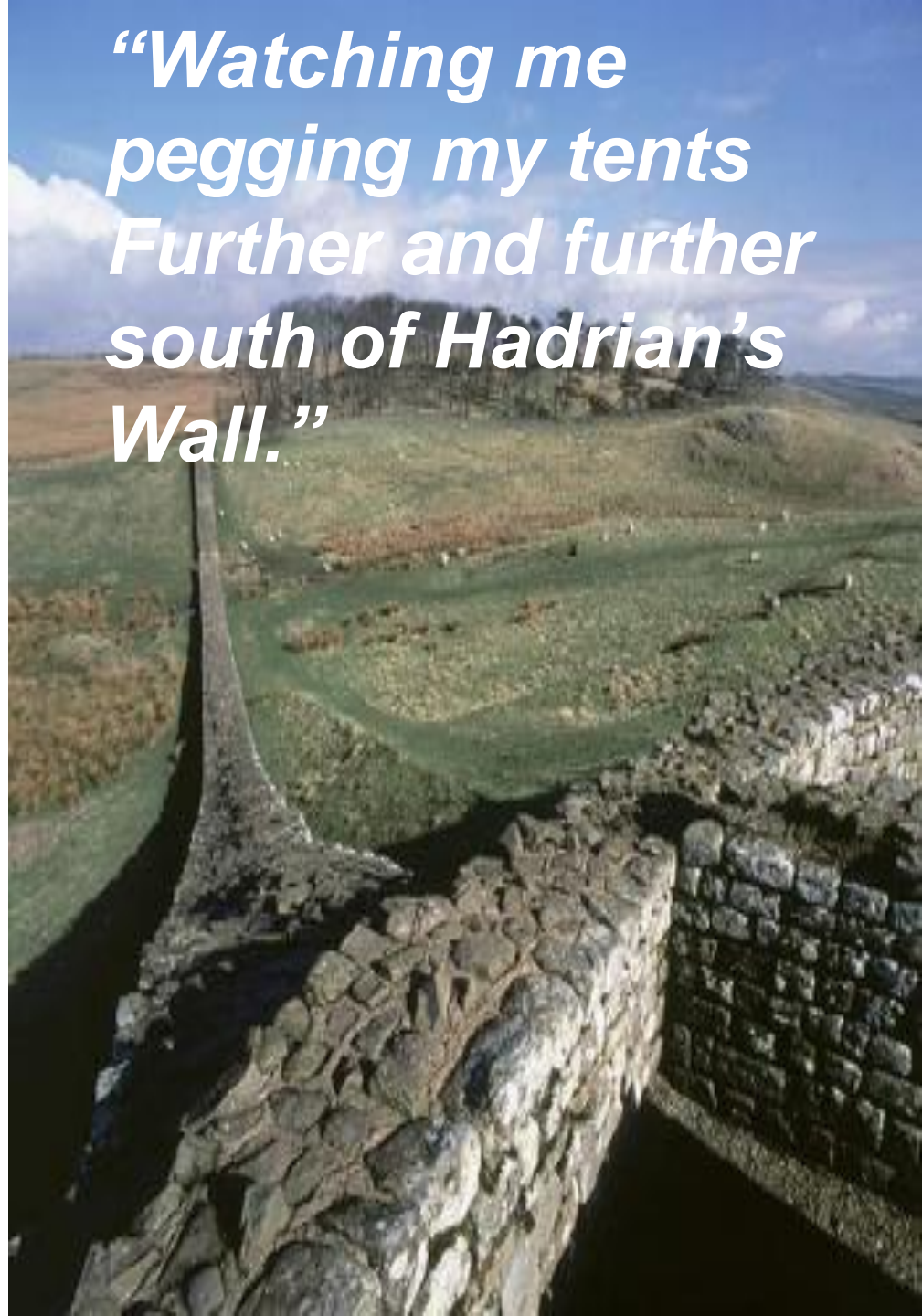
- The father transformed his house in this foreign land into a place where he belonged through his beloved gardens and golden cypresses.
- Absence of any reference to the outside world suggests that Feliks has created a safe and insular world where he can retreat to his beloved Poland through food, relics and his friends. He still belongs emotionally and spiritually to his birthplace.



# Feliks Skrzynecki

- The last stanza and the metaphor in the last two lines indicate that his father whom he loved and respected was aware that as his son grew older he was distancing himself from his Polish heritage.
- The simile and oxymoron, *“like a dumb prophet”* symbolises his father’s impotence to connect him to his heritage, and his wisdom that Skrzynecki, despite his denial, would always belong.

*“Watching me  
pegging my tents  
Further and further  
south of Hadrian’s  
Wall.”*



## Migrant Hostel- Parkes 1949-51

- Third person used to represent how he and the migrants were united in their alienation from the new country
- To cope with homesickness and the fear of the unknown, the migrants, “*sought each other out instinctively*”



# Migrant Hostel- Parkes 1949-51

- The single sentence in each stanza creates the speed of the lines only held in check by the use of a dash, an infrequent semi-colon or comma and the brevity of single lines, such as: “or were dying” suggesting the significant impact of the memory
- Feelings of impermanence and uncertainty as the migrants suddenly arrived and departed are suggested by enjambment - run-on-lines - symbolically representing the frequent “*comings and goings*”
- Similes “*like a homing pigeon*” and “*like birds of passage*” emphasise how the migrants yearn for their homeland where they belong physically, emotionally and spiritually; however, unlike the birds that can fly home, the migrants cannot return to their war torn homes that offered “*hunger and hate.*”

# Migrant Hostel- Parkes 1949-51

- Final stanza reinforces their sense of not belonging to this new country. The *“barrier at the main gate”* through the simile *“It rose and fell like a finger”* is a symbolic reminder of their alien status.
- The final two lines convey the fragility of their hopes and dreams for a new life in Australia:  
*“...lives  
That had only begun  
Or were dying.”*



# '10 Mary Street'

- Conveys the special feeling that you get when you are loved and nurtured in a house that is filled with evocative memories.
- However, the poem conveys an ambivalent sense of belonging.
- Free verse and enjambment creating the effect of a sudden flashback of memories that come unbidden from the past
- Personal, conversational style



# ‘10 Mary Street’

- Vivid imagery of the garden transports you to his childhood where he ravaged the garden that his parents lovingly tended
- His parent’s strong cultural connection to Poland is conveyed by the listing of Polish food and drink, and the personification of “pre-war Europe”
- Final stanza disrupts the feeling of belonging, and confronts you with its fragility and transience through the symbolic key that will “*open no house when this one is pulled down.*”



# St Patrick's College

- Honest, conversational poem relays his experiences as a child at school where he felt for eight years as if he never belonged.
- Personal recollections describe a school boy who never feels as if he belongs - simile poignantly represents his alienation.

**“Like a foreign tourist, uncertain of my destination”**



# St Patrick's College

- Anaphora: “*For eight years*” in two of the middle stanzas implies that his time at school was an imposed, unpleasant time – “*uncertain of my destination*”
- Pointed absence of any mention of connections with friends or teachers - isolation
- Skrzynecki's sense of failure at school is conveyed by the symbolic use of darkness that surrounds him in the third last line



# St Patrick's College

- First time we encounter his mother's perspective - what it takes to ensure that your child belongs in a new land and to the right social milieu.
- Warm relationship with father conveyed through the first poem absent when he is referring to his mother - repetition of the nomenclature "*Mother*" is detached and formal.



# Ancestors

- Philosophical reflection delivered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person moves the poem beyond the very personal to encompass how we all feel about our ancestors and our cultural heritage inviting us to share his thoughts and feel as if we belong to the world of the poem.
- *“Who are these shadows...standing shoulder to shoulder”* – omnipresence
- The rhetorical questions follow the ‘who, what, where and why’ pattern emphasising Skrzynecki’s ambivalent feelings about belonging to his cultural heritage.



# Ancestors

- The poem philosophically ponders the mystery of our ancestors, and explores how even when we feel disconnected we belong spiritually to the past
- Features imagery that is elusive conveying disconnection such as the “*bearded, faceless men*” and the anonymous landscape of mountains and moonlit plains and



PHOTO-CRAYON

# Ancestors

- Sibilant 's' and the onomatopoeic “whisper” emphasise the secrets that he cannot access
- He may deny his cultural heritage but he cannot ignore the powerful spiritual connection that he has with Poland and his ancestors – gustatory image: “*The wind tastes of blood.*”



# In the Folk Museum

- In contrast to 'Ancestors', this poem emphasises decay, acrimony and disconnection from the past.
- First four stanzas are structured as a single sentence representing the rush of memories.
- Opens symbolically in darkness, and moves to describe the relics from a cultural and historical past that is not Skrzynecki's.



# In the Folk Museum

- Speaking as an adult who does not belong to Australia and its historical past. You are confronted directly with his adult insecurities.
- He feels disconnected from the caretaker who he sees as being grey and cold, but who, as the simile “her hair’s the same colour as the grey clay bottle” suggests, belongs to the world of the museum. The alliterative use of the consonant ‘w’ represents Skrzynecki’s desire to leave this alien place.
- Ironically the last stanza ends with a direct question by the caretaker, “*Would you please sign the Visitor’s Book?*” representing Skrzynecki’s belief that he will always be a migrant who will never truly belong.

# Postcard

- Significant that 'Postcard' is the final poem in the anthology as it symbolically represents the ambivalence that Skrzynecki feels about belonging to his cultural heritage and self.
- He refuses to answer the "*voices of red gables*" in Poland, but he cannot ignore his spiritual connection to his place of birth, "*We will meet before you die.*"



# Postcard

- Combination of the first person and the second person address to the city of Warsaw – “*I never knew you*” – replicates natural speech - reinforced by the use of the dash to represent a reflective pause while Skrzynecki gathers his thoughts, and the rhetorical questions that convey his uncertainty and frustration – “*What’s my choice to be?*”



# Postcard

- Skrzynecki employs apostrophe to directly address the old city of Warsaw as if it is a living being, “*Warsaw, Old Town, I never knew you...*”
- He proceeds to describe passionately through emotive verbs – “*destroyed*”, “*massacred*” and “*exiled*” – the terrible destruction that instigated the migration of his parents and others to Australia, taking them away from a home that they “*cherish.*”



# Postcard

- His adamant denial of a connection builds in the second section, as he defiantly proclaims in the imperative voice “*Let me be.*” Even the use of the comma following the verb “*repeat*” in the line “*I repeat, I never knew you*” slows the pace of the line emphasising his rejection of his birthplace.
- This is reinforced in the final line in this section when he ends his rhetorical question with the disturbing, emotive noun “*despair*”.



# Postcard

- The prophetic last four lines in section three of the poem signify that although Skrzynecki denies emphatically the call of his birthplace and his cultural heritage, he will always be connected to Poland.
- This admission coming at the end of his anthology communicates Skrzynecki's reconciliation with his Polish identity and legacy, and his acceptance that he does belong.



## Section III: Extended Response

- Must demonstrate understanding of key concepts and ideas of belonging from the rubrics and through your response to the texts
- Develop theses or lines of argument
- Choose texts that connect with concepts



# HSC Exam

- The question must drive and shape your response.
- Your thesis or line of argument must be developed and sustained.
- Integrate your discussion of the ideas and the textual features and details of your texts using your thesis to shape the analysis.
- Your personal response to how belonging is represented and how your way of thinking has been challenged is valued!



# Developing a Thesis

- Strong opening paragraphs that introduce clear lines of argument or theses that directly address the question.
- A response that is driven by your thesis connected to the question. Each successive point must further your thesis through textual analysis and support. You can support or even challenge your thesis through the analysis of the text/s.
- Precise topic sentences that are connected to and build on the thesis.

# Developing a Thesis

- Judicious textual support: it is better to use detailed, relevant examples from the text/s than spurious, shallow examples.
- Always support the analysis of language features with examples from the text/s and evaluate their impact on the responder. Never use a shopping list of techniques!

# Extended Responses

- **Analyse:**
  - Begin with the idea or meaning first to avoid the shopping list
  - Explain and evaluate the meaning and impact of the feature
  - Integrate into the analysis and evaluation of the text/s



# Theses or Lines of Arguments

- We may deny our cultural heritage but it will always be there reminding us that we will always belong. The call of the blood connects is undeniable.
- The migrant in a new country finds it difficult to assimilate, and even after many years have passed and they have established a home where they belong, their connection to their birthplace is stronger.
- Belonging is continually in a state of ebb and flow. We fluctuate depending on the circumstances and our own perception between connection and disconnection.

# Concepts

Belonging is an ambivalent notion; a dynamic state of flux.



# Concepts

The greatest barrier to belonging is the self: our perceptions, assumptions and degree of self-efficacy act as enablers or impediments.



# Concepts

Belonging comes from within rather than without. To belong is to be. We cannot belong until we understand ourselves.



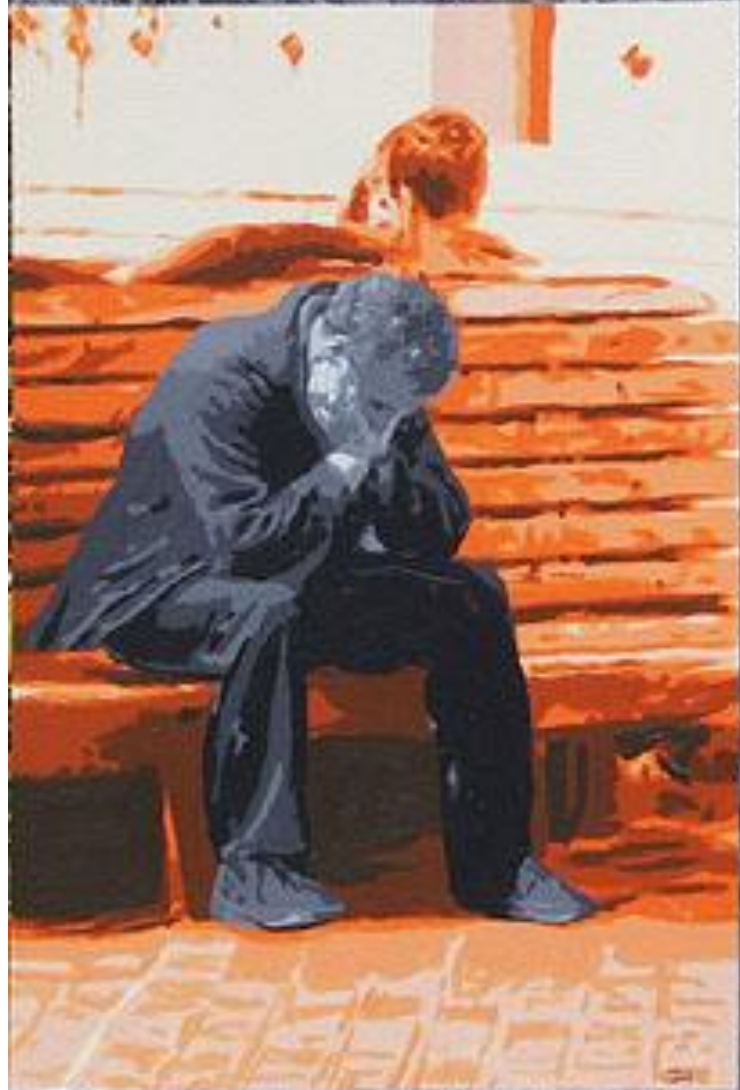
# Concepts

Place plays a fundamental role in the lives of human beings, it is the nexus of existence. Our connection to the world we move in impacts on our perception of belonging.



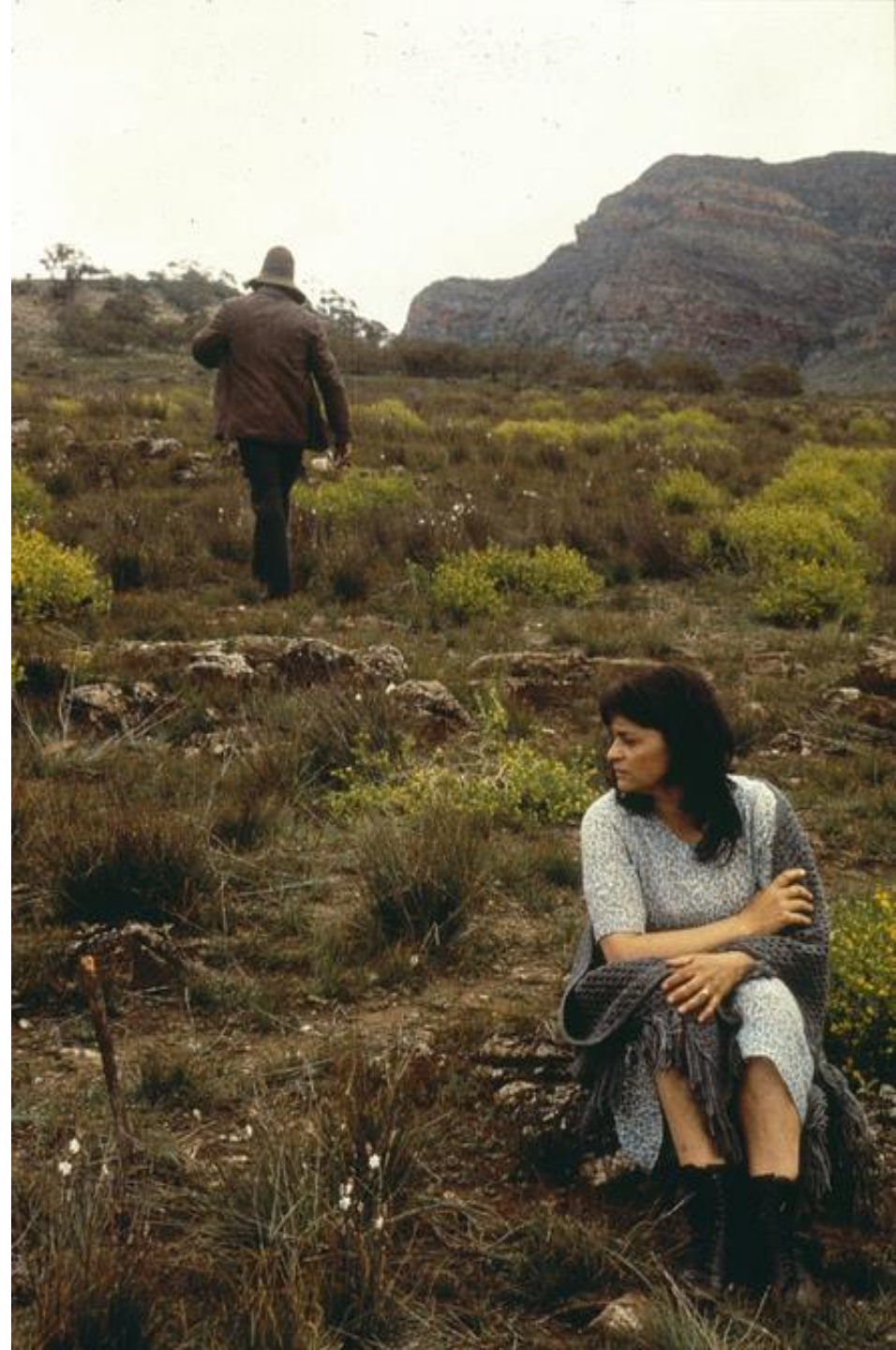
# Texts of Own Choosing

- Make connections through:
  - Alienation; rejection and dislocation
  - Ambivalence about belonging
  - Relationships that enrich or impede belonging
  - Belonging to self



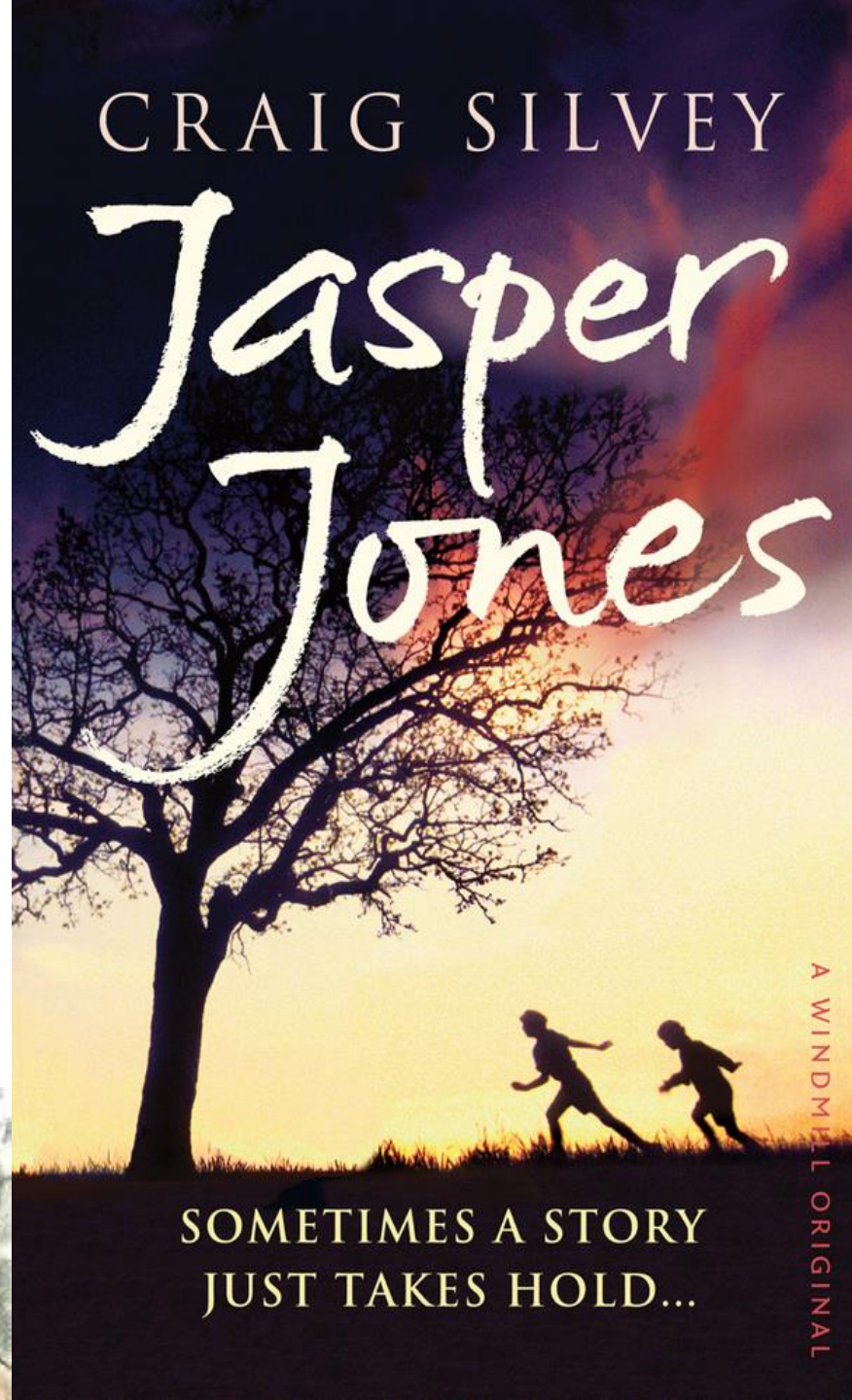
# Related Texts

- ***One Night the Moon***: Prejudice destroys all hope of a family being reunited.
- ***Beneath Clouds***: A community divided by racism.
- ***The Island***: Unquestioning conformity and mob rule in its most ugly and destructive form.
- **[Apocalypse Now](#)**
- ***Black Balloon, Che and Red Dog***
- ***The Lost Thing***
- **James Morrison**: '[I won't let you go](#)'
- **Linkin Park**: '*Somewhere I Belong*'
- ***The Kite Runner***



# Related Texts

- **Eddie Vedder:** *'Longing to Belong'*
- **Archie Roach:** *'Down City Streets'*
- **Catcher in the Rye:** Holden chooses alienation because of the phoniness of others.
- **Jasper Jones – Craig Silvey:** *'I think Jasper Jones speaks the truth in a community of liars.'*
- **TS.Eliot:** *'The Waste Land'*
- **Tim Winton:** *The Turning* – short stories



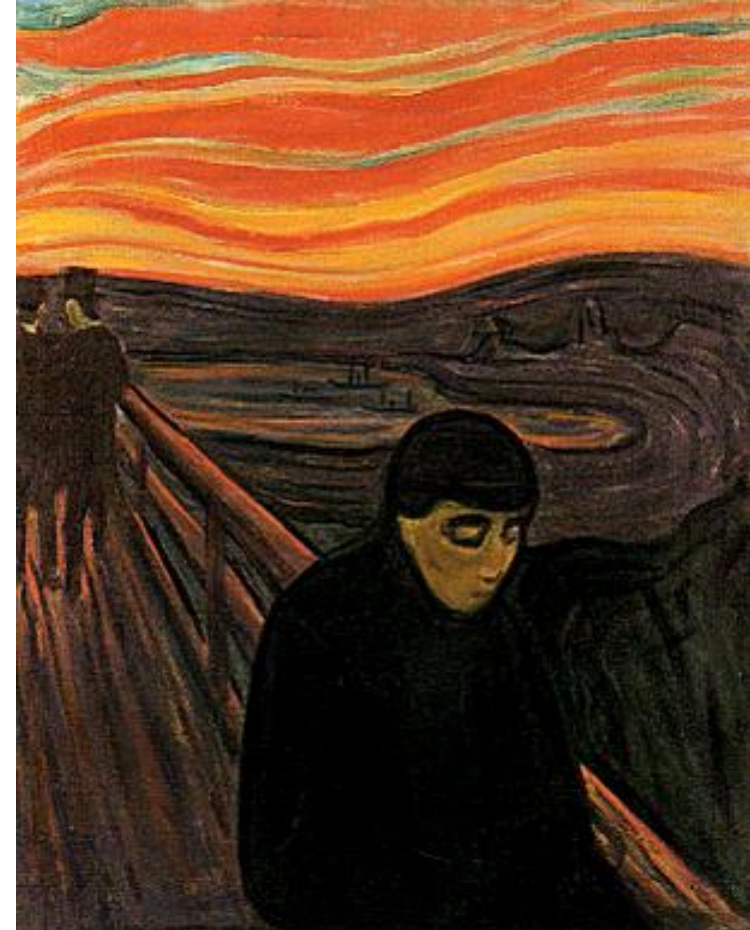
# Related Texts

- ***Social Network***: How relationships strengthen and challenge the notion of belonging.
- **Archie Roach's songs and poetry**: 'Took the Children Away'...racial barriers
- ***Whale Rider***: Gender barriers
- ***A Beautiful Mind***: Ignorance towards mental illness
- ***Water***
- ***Home songs***
- ***American Born Chinese*** - Gene Luen Yang



# Related Texts

- 'Despair' – Edvard Munch
- [YouTube](#) clips
- 'The RabBITer and his Family' - Russell Drysdale
- <http://www.immigrationbridge.com.au/tell-your->





# Resources

- Australian Screen: film clips:  
<http://aso.gov.au/titles/alpha/A/>
- <http://www.the-chimaera.com/May2008/Theme/Preface.html>
- <http://www.insidebreak.org.au/belonging/>
- <http://hscbelonging.wordpress.com/2009/12/01/belonging-to-a-place/>



<http://karenygr.wordpress.com/>